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SUBJECT: NYALA MAQDUM DENIES JANJAWOOD TURNCOAT TREND

REF: KHARTOUM 1845

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. In a November 29 meeting with FieldOff, the Maqdam (traditional viceroy of the Fur) of Nyala, Ahmed Rajal, denied reports that members of the janjaweed in Darfur were deserting their traditional benefactor, the Government of Sudan (GoS), in favor of rebel movements, as reported reftel. The Maqdam, himself a Fur, was unrelenting in his criticism of the GoS in all aspects of its Darfur agenda, from using the United Nations Security Council as its proxy, to undermining traditional mechanisms aimed at tribal reconciliation, to its plan to divide Kalma IDPs against themselves. The Maqdam insisted that the venue for future peace talks be changed and that the UN and African Union make a greater effort to reach out to the disparate rebel groups and factions. On the idea of one political figure emerging to bring peace to Darfur, the Maqdam declared that the IDPs "do not care who it is, just as long as he brings peace." END SUMMARY.

"REAL JANJAWOOD WILL NEVER LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT"

2. (SBU) In a November 29 meeting with FieldOff, the Nyala Maqdam, accompanied by his General-Secretary and Legal Advisor, flatly denied rumors currently circulating around Darfur of defections by the janjaweed from their GoS supply source to rebel movement ranks, as reported reftel. Instead, the Maqdam attributed the reported trend to GoS conspiracy, stating that the GoS was laboring to split its janjaweed element in two: those Arabs who could infiltrate the rebel groups as "spies" pretending to be rebels, and those Arab tribes who would remain loyal to the GoS to do its dirty work in destabilizing Darfur. "All Arab tribes," the very suspicious and embittered Maqdam declared, "want to destabilize Darfur."

3. (SBU) The Maqdam and his advisors considered that the GoS was doing the same thing in trying to divide and conquer the IDPs, using recent events in Kalma as an example. "Arms in Kalma aren't the issue," the Maqdam said, "it's the IDPs themselves and what they represent that are the biggest problem for the Government." He blamed the recent escalation in carjackings and attacks on INGOs on the GoS, which he claimed was flooding Nyala Town with its vehicles at night to terrorize aid organizations in a concerted attempt to cut off provision of assistance to the IDPs.

4. (SBU) The Maqdam went on to talk about a similar GoS strategy with regard to "resolving" the traditional tribal clashes over land that continued to plague South Darfur, including those between the Arab Habaniya and Salamat tribes. He explained that in such cases here again the GoS was working to undermine established mechanisms historically tasked to reconcile such disputes. He cited as an example the GoS' creation "in name only" of a consultative body that was intended to usurp conflict resolution responsibilities from the Darfur Council, which typically handles these types of disputes, on issues between the Zaghawa, Misseriya and Berti tribes.

DARFUR NEEDS PEACE, NOT PERSONALITY

¶5. (SBU) The Maqdam and his advisors made clear that so profound was the "disappointment" among Darfur populations on the ground over rounds of failed efforts to effect a tangible peace in Darfur that the IDPs no longer looked to any one person to do what now seems the impossible. "The IDPs don't care who it is who brings peace and stability," the Maqdam explained, "whether it's Abdelwahid or Khalil Ibrahim or Abdelshafie, just as long as he actually brings it [peace]." (Note: Though the Maqdam may downplay Abdulwahid's influence, his comments may be wishful thinking. The vast majority of independent sources indicate that Abdulwahid continues to loom large, framing the debate on both the peacekeeping force and the political process, particularly among Fur IDPs.)

¶6. (SBU) On the Darfur peace process, the Maqdam and his advisors described their stay in Juba while factions of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) had united from 17 factions into two, according to the Maqdam. He added that he had consulted with six of SLA leader Abdelwahid's advisors in Nairobi (as well as with one of Abdelwahid's wives) at the same time, with those reps dismissing Juba prospects, as they considered the factions present there as unrepresentative of the movements. The Maqdam disagreed, saying that the Juba participants command significant forces on the ground in Darfur, which affords them credibility in Juba. (Note: Credible UN/AU and USG reporting indicate that with the exception of the JEM/Collective Leadership, none of the groups that participated in the Juba unification meetings maintain a significant military presence on the ground.)

¶7. (SBU) As for Abdelwahid himself, the Maqdam said that he had refused to see the Maqdam and his delegation when they tried to visit him in France in September. The Maqdam called Abdelwahid "strange" for his contradictory rhetoric on one hand about respect for a Darfur ceasefire and his refusal to take such rhetoric to

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peace talks on the other. This discrepancy, the Maqdam (like other Fur leaders lately) noted, was not lost on the IDPs: although Abdelwahid was in daily phone contact with IDP leaders in Kalma promising to personally deliver the international forces that would secure their safety, the IDPs no longer believed him.

IDPs DISAPPOINTED IN UN AS WELL

¶8. (SBU) Abdelwahid was not the only source of IDP disillusionment, according to the Maqdam. He and his advisors looked to the UN as the silver bullet solution to Darfur troubles and lamented the inability of the UN Security Council (UNSC) to make good on its resolutions on Darfur (they cited UNSCR 1706 in particular). While the Maqdam and his advisors were sensitive to the UNSC dynamics dictating policymaking on Darfur, they nonetheless advised that the UN, the Secretary-General in particular, start to "make decisions as the UN, not as the Sudanese Government's proxy." The Maqdam added that the UN should also be prepared to assume responsibility for the influx of non-Sudanese Arab tribes steadily settling in West Darfur, which he noted again was part of the GoS' Darfur agenda.

¶9. (SBU) Like other groups on the ground in Darfur, the Maqdam was losing faith in the ability of the AU-UN mediation team to deliver viable peace negotiations on Darfur (reftel) and was now regarding the team as a pawn of the GoS. He cited the same reasons as have other groups on the ground for this failure: refusal by the AU-UN mediation to deal with any side other than the GoS and the team's refusal to change venue for peace talks (the Maqdam recommended South Africa or Holland).

¶10. (SBU) COMMENT. The Maqdam's theories reflected the same paranoia expressed by other rebel movements on the ground about the GoS' ulterior motives with regard to destabilizing Darfur in the run-up to deployment of international forces under UNAMID. However, instead of attempting to support UNAMID as an antidote to what he perceived as a not-so-hidden GoS agenda, the Maqdam seemed to be further stoking existing IDP disillusionment and in fact setting the peacekeeping operation up for failure by touting it and subsequent UNSC action as the only ways to counter the GoS and bring peace to Darfur. He did not seem swayed by arguments that a solution for

Darfur must come from a variety of sources, not least from the groups and tribes on the ground which he represents, and further targeted UN/AU outreach, especially in Nyala, in this regard is clearly necessary. END COMMENT.

11. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.

FERNANDEZ